

**MEDIA RELEASE
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Celebrate Alberta's Multiculturalism at Glenbow Museum

Calgary, AB (May 9, 2005) – Beginning July 1, 2005, Glenbow Museum's entire second floor will be transformed into a rich celebration of Southeast Asian culture, with specific focus on the regions of Southern China, including Hong Kong, Indo-China (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia), as well as Thailand.

Glenbow's summer 2005 show, *Voices of Southeast Asia* on from July 1, 2005 to September 25, 2005, will comprise of four exhibits that examine the vibrant culture of Southeast Asia from both historical and contemporary contexts. The feature exhibit, *Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit* from the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, will examine the rich customs and traditions of Vietnam through colourful objects such as masks, textiles, ceramics and rich photographs. *Seven Stories*, will share the personal stories of seven immigrants who left their homeland to begin new lives in Canada. *Foreign and Familiar: Reconsidering the Everyday* is a contemporary art exhibit featuring the works of first generation Asian-Canadian artists who reconsider everyday objects and how they shape the way we see the world and each other. Finally, we will showcase Glenbow Museum's magnificent permanent Asian gallery, *Many Faces, Many Paths: Art of Asia* with over eighty world-class sculptures including rare pieces from Cambodia, China, and Thailand symbolizing ancient religions and mythologies.

According to Glenbow Museum President and CEO Mike Robinson, *Voices of Southeast Asia* was developed by taking a collaborative approach. Curators, designers, and programmers worked with Canada's Asian artists and communities to share the various artistic voices and cultural perspectives of our Canadian mosaic – of particular importance during Alberta's Centennial year.

"*Voices of Southeast Asia* is truly a collaborative effort on the part of Calgary's diverse Asian communities and our Glenbow team," Mike Robinson explains. "The show enables many stories to be told and many world views to resonate in the telling. We thank the members of the Glenbow Asian Advisory Committee and their many community contacts for helping research and present this exhibition."

As part of Glenbow's 2005 Centennial initiatives to celebrate Calgary's multiculturalism, Glenbow Museum will open *Voices of Southeast Asia* with a special event – Glenbow, in partnership with Citizenship & Immigration Canada, will be the host venue for the Canada Day Citizenship Court Ceremony in Calgary – welcoming 100 new citizens to Canada. Cultural performances performed by local Asian community members will follow the ceremony. Celebrate the diversity of our great nation with this ceremonial reminder of the diverse cultures, ethnicities, and languages that bind us together as one nation.

Glenbow Museum has developed a range of programming activities with Calgary's Asian communities to complement the visitor's experience with this culturally significant exhibition. Programming activities include Chinatown walking tours, *Discovery Room* activities, interpretive talks, and performances. One of the programming highlights scheduled for September is a water puppet performance inspired by the ancient and secret art of *Mua roi nuoc* – or Vietnamese water puppetry. Produced with Calgary's own internationally acclaimed professional puppet theatre, the Green Fools, *Dancing on Water* will be a dazzling extravaganza as people will see these intricately carved puppets magically move by themselves – all on the glittering surface of the water.

Voices of Southeast Asia welcomes you to experience the vibrant traditions of this region's peoples, and to celebrate the diversity of our 100 year old province. Learn more about Glenbow Museum by calling (403) 268-4100 or visit www.glenbow.org for details on hours, admission prices, and further programming details.

Voices of Southeast Asia is presented by Trico Homes, and supported by Calgary Region Arts Foundation, the Calgary Herald, CBC Calgary, Pattison Outdoor, Calgary Hyatt Regency, and GlobalFest.

Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit is a travelling exhibit organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York, and the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, Hanoi. This travelling exhibit is made possible by the philanthropic leadership of the Freeman Foundation. Additional generous funding provided by the Ford Foundation for the collaboration between the American Museum of Natural History and the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology. Also supported by the Asian Cultural Council. Planning group provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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**Landmark Exhibit Showcasing Contemporary Vietnamese Culture at Glenbow
EXHIBIT BACKGROUNDER – Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit**

Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit at Glenbow Museum from July 1 to September 25, 2005, examines Vietnamese culture today, only a few decades after the war, and approximately 15 years after Vietnam began opening to the global market. Organized by the American Museum of Natural History in New York City in collaboration with the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology in Hanoi, this landmark presentation focuses on a broad range of cultural beliefs and practices, reflecting Vietnam's diverse population.

Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit celebrates the rich and vibrant culture of Vietnam in the 21st century. Over 700 artifacts, as well as photographs and video footage, explore life among Vietnam's more than 50 ethnic groups. In the exhibit, we invite you to embark on seven different journeys through a changing Vietnam and to experience the incredible diversity of its landscape and its people. Today, more than a million tourists journey to Vietnam each year, a country that many of them first knew from images of war. *Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit* is divided into seven sections:

- *Journeys through Time and Space* introduces visitors to Vietnam's myths, history and geography spanning some 2,000 years.
- *Journeys of Gods, Family and Ancestors* focuses on the lunar New Year festival, *Tet*, one of the largest celebrations of the year.
- *Journeys of People and Goods* examines the entrepreneurial climate of Vietnam since entering the global marketplace in the 1980s, with a special focus on ceramics, basketry and the sale of embroidered textiles and batiks from the north.
- *Journeys of Life and Death* looks at rituals marking life passages, such as coming-of-age ceremonies, weddings and funerals.
- *Journeys of Heroes and Deities* explores traditional village festivals with their elaborate and exuberant processions, and the unique art of water puppetry performance.
- *Journeys to Other Worlds* illustrates the spiritual journeys made by shamans to provide health and good fortune.
- *Journeys through the Year* depicts the mid-Autumn festival, originally a harvest festival and now a children's celebration with toys, masks, lanterns and costumes.

Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit is one of four exhibits within the *Voices of Southeast Asia* exhibition at Glenbow Museum. Other exhibits include *Seven Stories, Foreign and Familiar: Reconsidering the Everyday*, and *Many Faces, Many Paths*.

Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit is a travelling exhibit organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York, and the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, Hanoi. This travelling exhibit is made possible by the philanthropic leadership of the Freeman Foundation. Additional generous funding provided by the Ford Foundation for the collaboration between the American Museum of Natural History and the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology. Also supported by the Asian Cultural Council. Planning group provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

**Glenbow Celebrates Alberta's Diversity during Centennial Year
EXHIBIT BACKGROUNDER – Seven Stories**

What does it take to move around the world and develop new roots? As part of the summer exhibition, *Voices of Southeast Asia* from July 1 to September 25, 2005, Glenbow Museum has curated *Seven Stories*, an exhibit that will share the personal journeys of seven Calgarians, originally from Southeast Asia who chose Canada as their new home.

Over the last twenty years, Calgary has become increasingly diverse as we welcome immigrants from around the world. But how often do we stop and think about the experiences that brought our new neighbours to Canada? Can we really understand the bravery it took to come to this distant land, to start from scratch and to survive in a different language, climate and lifestyle?

Seven Stories will provide museum visitors with the personal stories of seven immigrants – how they left their land of birth, the challenges they faced and the new roots they have found in Canada. Each story is unique, but at the same time, they reflect the diversity of experiences for all new immigrants to Canada.

Victor Mah is a fourth generation Canadian whose great grandfather first came to Canada from Southeastern China in the 1880s. A century later, Linh Nguyen and her family immigrated from Vietnam to join their family in Calgary. Kanokwon Davis met a Canadian traveller in Thailand, and after a long distance courtship, they were married in a traditional Buddhist ceremony. Thep Thavonsouk immigrated from Laos in the early 1970s, and uses his paintings to bridge his Canadian and Laotian identities. Ming Siu and his young family took a chance on freedom by escaping from Vietnam to Hong Kong on a month long boat journey. Ngam Cham escaped on foot from the Khmer Rouge across the Cambodian border. Wayne Chiu first came from Hong Kong for his education, and has settled here and worked hard to found his successful construction business.

Seven Stories is one of four exhibits within the *Voices of Southeast Asia* exhibition at Glenbow Museum. Other exhibits include *Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit*, *Foreign and Familiar: Reconsidering the Everyday*, and *Many Faces, Many Paths: Art of Asia*.

Foreign and Familiar: Reconsidering the Everyday
EXHIBIT BACKGROUNDER: Foreign and Familiar

As part of the *Voices of Southeast Asia* exhibition, Glenbow Museum will feature five contemporary Canadian artists whose work examines the construction of identities through everyday objects, symbols and experiences. *Foreign and Familiar: Reconsidering the Everyday* will bring together five Canadian artists of Chinese and Vietnamese descent, questioning the aesthetics in our daily lives.

Foreign and Familiar is an exploration of ideas concerning seeing and knowing. How we come to “know” another culture is related to everyday popular images, symbols, and language associations. This exhibit challenges these everyday notions. Featuring the works of Sin-Ying Ho (Mississauga), Kim Huynh (Calgary), Linh Ly (Calgary), Nhan Duc Nguyen (Vancouver) and Ho Tam (Victoria), these artists explore how everyday objects, symbols and experiences can deceive us, inform us and shape the way we see others. Their examinations highlight instances where everyday life and cultural differences intersect and consequently, where social relationships are affected.

The featured works range in size and media including photography, installation, ceramics, and video. Linh Ly constructs a massive photo-tapestry of local Vietnamese restaurants to articulate her experience within that community and at the same time, acknowledges the inability to accurately translate it. Ho Tam’s eight minute video presents China’s identity as fragmented, constructed, and fleeting. This moving montage of familiar images invites us to examine our assumptions about China.

Artists Kim Huynh and Sin-ying Ho examine how political constructs are at times overlooked in the everyday. Kim Huynh’s installation uses sugar to reveal power relations that exist with day-to-day objects and how those notions structure the way we see each other. Huynh points out that sugar is Third World and Refined, White, Yellow or Brown and that these descriptive terms are loaded with cultural references. Sin-ying Ho uses ceramics to question ideas of culture, language, and power as her work insists that ceramics embodies political values and documents the history between cultures.

Participation is integral to the experience of the everyday. Our interactions shape and change who we are. In his living altar to the fictitious spirit of Ancient Citizen, Nhan Duc Nguyen reflects on shifting personal, cultural and national identities.

Together, these five artists challenge our notions of the everyday, exposing the conventional habits of mind that shape the way we see the world and each other. *Foreign and Familiar* continues Glenbow’s collaborative approach to exhibition development by considering the voices of Canada’s Asian artists and communities; working collaboratively to share artistic and cultural perspectives of our Canadian mosaic.

Foreign and Familiar: Reconsidering the Everyday is one of four exhibits within the *Voices of Southeast Asia* exhibition at Glenbow Museum. Other exhibits include *Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit*, *Seven Stories*, and *Many Faces, Many Paths: Art of Asia*.

**Learn about the philosophy of Theravada Buddhism
EXHIBIT BACKGROUNDER – Many Faces, Many Paths: Art of Asia**

Rediscover Glenbow Museum's permanent Asian collection with over eighty rare world-class sculptures. Tucked away on the second floor of the museum is a peaceful oasis known as *Many Faces, Many Paths: Art of Asia*. The *Voices of Southeast Asia* exhibition provides an opportunity for Glenbow to showcase this fabulous permanent collection of Hindu and Buddhist sculptures from many regions of Asia when, from July 1 to September 25, 2005, the entire second floor will be transformed into a celebration of Southeast Asian culture.

As part of the *Voices of Southeast Asia* exhibition, a small exhibit on the philosophy and practice of Theravada Buddhism will be featured in the lobby. This tradition is based on the original teachings of the Buddha and has spread throughout Southeast Asia, especially Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia and southern Vietnam.

Another highlight of the gallery is a rare walking Buddha from 12th century Thailand. This unique style of depicting the Buddha was developed in Thailand. The Buddha is shown in motion, with one foot forward and his robes gently swaying. The near life size example in the Glenbow collection is believed to be the oldest wooden sculpture of this style existing in the world.

Accompanied by classical Indian music, visitors are invited to relax in this gallery and enjoy the serenity of a meditating Buddha, or be thrilled by the wrathful demeanour of the warrior goddess, Palden Lhamo. Audio wands are available for visitors to hear stories of creation and destruction as they marvel at the detailed carvings, the fine casting techniques, or the intricate paintings.

Through the generosity of the Bumper Development Corporation Ltd., the people of Calgary have been able to experience this significant collection, to enjoy its peace, tranquility and creativity and to learn about the rich cultural heritage of Asia over the last decade. This collection is of critical importance for the interpretation of Buddhist and Hindu traditions, culture and society, and for the continued understanding of the exquisite art forms of Asia. Rediscover Glenbow's permanent Asian collection and let experience the vibrant traditions of Asia.

Many Faces, Many Paths: Art of Asia is one of four exhibits within the *Voices of Southeast Asia* exhibition at Glenbow Museum. Other exhibits include *Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit, Foreign and Familiar: Reconsidering the Everyday*, and *Seven Stories*.

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Dancing on Water – Inspired by the Wonders of Vietnamese Water Puppetry

Calgary, AB (May 9, 2005) – *Dancing on Water* is a unique collaboration between Glenbow Museum and Green Fools Theatre offered as part of the *Voices of Southeast Asia* summer exhibition. Inspired by the ancient and secret art of *Mua roi nuoc* – or Vietnamese water puppetry – this extravaganza will bring to life intricately carved puppets that magically move and dance by themselves – all on the glittering surface of the water.

Building on the success of last year's *Ballet in Bronze*, this marks Glenbow Museum's next exciting partnership with Calgary's vibrant artistic community. *Dancing on Water* illuminates aspects of our summer exhibition *Voices of Southeast Asia*, bringing together history, art, and contemporary culture in a spectacle you won't soon forget.

Performance Schedule:

September 8 & 9 at 7:30 p.m.

September 10 at 2:30 & 7:30 p.m.

September 11 at 2:30 p.m.

September 15 & 16 at 7:30 p.m.

September 17 at 2:30 & 7:30 p.m.

September 18 at 2:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 for adult and \$12 for children 12 and under including museum admission with a 20% discount for Glenbow Members. Each performance will be followed by a question and answer session with the performers, who will talk about their creative process, and experiences adapting the magic of Vietnamese water puppetry. All performances are in the Burlington Resources Theatre at Glenbow Museum.

The ancient art of Vietnamese water puppetry first emerged in the 12th century A.D., out of several small villages in North Vietnam. Each village had their own puppet guild that closely guarded their secrets and techniques, and passed them down from generation to generation. The shows themselves were magical, featuring fireworks, live music, and fully articulated puppets that would dance, fight, and spew water on the surface of the murky water, controlled by puppeteers who obscured their actions behind a beautiful floating pagoda. Today in Vietnam there are several state-run water puppet theatres that play their elaborate shows to crowds of 400 tourists and locals at a time. What the Green Fools have created is a performance that is inspired by this ancient tradition, but is also thoroughly contemporary, and thoroughly Canadian; paying tribute to myths and traditions from all corners of Calgary's multi-cultural communities in a celebration of timeless artistry.

Voices of Southeast Asia on at Glenbow Museum from July 1 to September 25, 2005 is comprised of four exhibits: *Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit*, *Foreign and Familiar: Reconsidering the Everyday*, *Seven Stories*, and *Many Faces, Many Paths: Art of Asia*.